

The Mirror

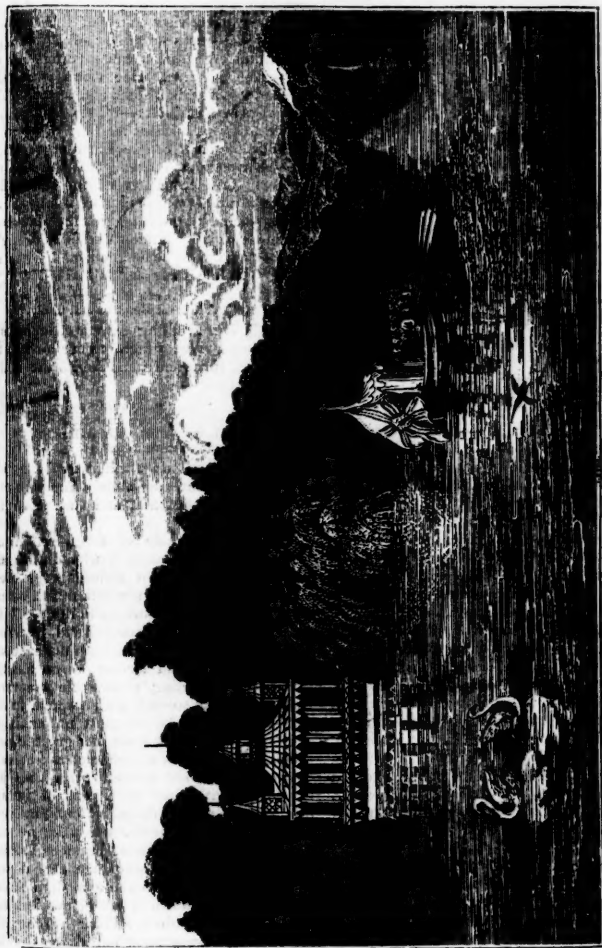
OF

LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

No. 738.]

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VIRGINIA WATER.

VIRGINIA WATER.

OUR twelfth volume (p. 220) contains so excellent a description of Virginia Water, that, in presenting to our readers another view of this celebrated retreat, we are little disposed to add "more last words" of its charming scenery. Indeed, the writer of the paper here referred to has so nicely estimated the natural beauties and artificial embellishment of the whole district, that he has left nothing to be described of the attractions or merits of either.

At this moment, however, Mr. Jesse's Last Series of *Gleanings* has dropped in opportunely enough, especially as it contains a few pages descriptive of the Royal Parks and Residences, and noticing Virginia Water; the peculiar value of which information arises from Mr. Jesse's sensible admiration of natural scenery, as well as from his official advantages as Surveyor of his Majesty's Parks and Palaces. "From Cumberland Lodge," says Mr. Jesse, "there is a delightful drive to the Virginia Water. This fine lake, which is supposed to be the largest piece of artificial water in Europe, was formed at a great expense, and is fed by a small, running stream which passes through the park. The fishing temple of George the Fourth is the most conspicuous object on its banks. It contains one good room, and would never be supposed to have been erected by a disciple of Izaak Walton. Like the temples of Nankin, it appears covered with gold-leaf. There is also an island which has a fanciful building erected upon it—the Hermitage, and, in the distance, the Belvidere, a triangular edifice, with a tower at each corner, and having a battery of twenty-one pieces of cannon. There are numerous pleasure-boats on the water, and a beautiful frigate in miniature. All these boats are kept in the best order, and do great credit to the officer in charge of them.

"Near the Bagshot road, the water from the lake forms a beautiful cascade. On one side of this is a curious cavern, the stone fragments of which were dug up on Bagshot Heath. It still preserves the shape in which it was originally discovered, and is supposed to have been an ancient cromlech, or place of worship. The walk opposite the fishing temple is open to the public, and is a very pleasant one, and of considerable extent. The drives are varied in every direction, and fine views are seen from several parts of them."

We have only two observations to add on this passage. First, according to the paper in our twelfth volume, Virginia Water is not even the largest piece of artificial water in this kingdom, it being exceeded by that at Blenheim. Secondly, a cromlech is not an ancient "place of worship;" but a crooked,

flat stone, supposed to have been an altar for sacrifice before the Christian æra. (See *Mirror*, vol. xii. p. 227.)

MISS MITFORD.

IN that most interesting theme, the study of the human mind,—endlessly varied in its subjects of inquiry, and affording to the searcher after its diversified shades, an inexhaustible source of speculation,—not the least curious and striking difference is found, in the opposite view taken of the predominating happiness or misery of human life, by minds of, perhaps, equal powers for settling the question. One views it as altogether, "weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable," and says with Hamlet:—"This goodly firmament, look you, appears no other thing to me than a pestilent congregation of vapours." We hear such an one exclaim with the melancholy Child, "I never loved the world." The Christian philosophy of Johnson did not prevent his coming to the mournful conclusion, that "human life is a scene in which much is to be endured, and little enjoyed." While Pope asserts that—

"Life can little more supply,

"Than just to look about us and to die."

Truth, ever avoiding extremes, inclines us to Southey's view, which at once hushes the murmur of impatience, and sobers the flutter of expectation:—

"Nature hath assigned

Two sovereign remedies for human woe,

Religion, surest, firmest, safest, best,

And strenuous action next."

—"It is heaven on earth, (said the wise Verulam,) to have one's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."

On the other side of the question are arrayed an equal number, who diffuse the sunshine of their own feelings over every subject they touch upon, who find "all nature music to the ear, and beauty to the eye." Of this happy class is Miss Mitford, to whose sense, nature animate and inanimate, seems arrayed in perpetual charms,—who has the faculty of extracting pleasurable emotions from scenes and subjects which would, to the generality of minds, be most unpromising subjects for interest. From her graphic pen, the homeliest scenes and characters receive a charm they had not before. "Our Village" is peopled with rural specimens of humanity, such as may, perhaps, be found in every other village: but, under her painting, nature in her rudest dress, becomes refined simplicity. The vice, ignorance, and depravity too often found in these modern Arcadias, is softened down or altogether hidden, and you ramble with her through the "village," pleased—you know not why. Crabbe was true to nature; but, he copied her sternest realities, and left them in their

naked dreariness, unsoftened by those mellowing shades which have the power to engage kindness and sympathy for our fellow beings in their rudest form. Abjuring what he called the "tinsel trappings of poetic pride," he declared that "Auburn and Eden were no more below." The fault of engaging us to look with complacency on characters altogether contrary to "that faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw," was equally prominent in the bard of Avon and Sir Walter Scott. It is the magic art which engages our forbearance and amuses us with Falstaff, mine hostess Quickly, Bardolph, Pistol, and the rest of Prince Hal's most faulty associates. Why is it that we weary not of the never-ending officiousness of Caleb Balderston, that even the recklessness of Mike Lambourne revolts not, and that the rough honesty of Dandie Dinmont, and the plain, unadorned worth and persevering affection of Jenny Deans, so much delight us?

In common with these great names, Miss Mitford has opened a mine of unlooked-for interest, in the characters with which she has peopled "Our Village:" they have, it would seem, afforded her a "perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets, where no crude surfeit reigns." Could any character be more unpromising as a subject for her pen, (to the common eye,) than Sam Puge, the Proteus of many avocations? How faithfully drawn from life is her washerwoman, Nanny Sims, beguiling her humid existence with never-ending tea and scandal! One of the striking excellencies in Miss Mitford's style is a rich vein of comic humour, a harmless satire, which, as the clown said of his in the forest of Ardennes, "like a wild goose, flies unclaim'd of any one." Its point is occasionally directed against herself, as when she so laughably describes her day of petty annoyance, when the "lost keys" involved her in so much perplexity, "traversing house and garden four hours for the intolerable keys;"—the arrival of a professed teadruker, (Lady Mary H.,) at the close of this miserable day, one who required to have the "gentle stimulant in full perfection,—obliged to send for tea to the village-shop!—it was the very extremity of small distress." Amusing as are her descriptions of village life, making due allowance for the softening hues which her benignant and glowing fancy spreads over scenes and characters of homely, and, in some cases, revolting coarseness, she is happier, because nearer to reality in her sketches of a country town. In accompanying her through the streets of "Belford Regis," you hear nothing of its inhabitants that can alarm the most zealous lover of probability who ever abjured a novel for its departure from matter of fact.

Miss Mitford is an instance of that versatility of genius, which delighting to depict

the simplest traits in rural life, and which can paint with irresistible comic force every day feelings and associations, can yet sound the depths of tragic poetry, and unveil those darker shades of human feeling, which, alas! in too many cases, "hold the mirror up to nature." *Rienzi* abounds with strong and masterly touches, displaying that searching knowledge of poor humanity so indispensable in a dramatic writer. Is this dark assertion of *Rienzi* true?—

"Fear and old hate,
They are sure weavers, they work for the storm,
The whirlwind, and the rocking surge: their knot
Endures till death."

How beautiful is the yearning of Claudia after her former home!—

"Mine own dear home!
Father, I love not this new state—these halls
Where comfort dies in vastness—these trim maids,
Whose service wearies me. Oh! mine old home,
My quiet, pleasant chamber, with the myrtle
Woven round the casement, and the cedar by,
Shading the sun; my garden overgrown
With flowers and herbs, thick-set as grass in fields."

Highly, however, as Miss Mitford ranks in the literary world, and deservedly so, as a writer of richly-varied genius, there is, to our eyes, one trait wanting throughout her writings, which no admiration of her brilliant talents can prevent our regretting. It is the almost total absence of allusion to that future and eternal state of things, with its immortal hopes and heavenward aspirings, in which the dwellers in hall or cottage, village or town, are alike interested. We would not advocate that misjudging spirit, which would intrude high and holy themes where merely human feeling should alone have place; but, we verge on the other extreme, when what ought to be the pervading spirit is so quenched and kept out of sight. We shall be suspected of a wish to spy out spots in the sun, when we thus presume to discern a flaw in writings so redolent of all that charms the fancy. Still, we must think those authors the most admirable, who, without fanatical parade, let this soul-exalting principle pervade the motives, actions, and characters they portray; and, through the various paths which genius treads, for ever bear in view, that hope of brighter worlds, which tells the mourner that "The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded spring encircle all."

Kirton-Lindsey.

ANNE R.

EXTRAORDINARY HEAT AND DROUGHT.

IN 763, the summer was so hot that the springs dried up.

IN 860, the heat was so intense that, near Worms, the reapers dropped dead in the fields.

IN 993, and again in 994, it was so hot that the corn and fruit were burnt up.

THE year 1000 was so hot and dry that, in Germany, the pools of water disappeared,

and the fish, being left to stink in the mud, bred a pestilence.

In 1022, the heat was so excessive, that both men and cattle were struck dead.

In 1130, the earth yawned with drought. Springs and rivers disappeared, and even the Rhine was dried up in Alsace.

In 1159, not a drop of rain fell in Italy after the month of May.

The year 1171 was extremely hot in Germany.

In 1232, the heat was so great, especially in Germany, that it is said that eggs were roasted in the sands.

In 1260, many of the Hungarian soldiers died of excessive heat at the famous battle fought near Bela.

The consecutive years 1276 and 1277 were so hot and dry as to occasion a great scarcity of fodder.

The years 1293 and 1294 were extremely hot, and so were likewise 1303 and 1304, both the Rhine and Danube having dried up.

In 1333, the cornfields and vineyards were burnt up.

The years 1393 and 1394 were excessively hot and dry.

In 1447, the summer was extremely hot.

In the successive years 1473 and 1474, the whole earth seemed on fire. In Hungary, one could wade across the Danube.

The four consecutive years, 1538, 1539, 1540, and 1541, were excessively hot, and the rivers dried up.

In 1556, the drought was so great that the springs failed. In England, wheat rose from 8s. to 53s. a quarter.

The years 1615 and 1616 were very dry over Europe.

In 1646, it was excessively hot.

In 1652, the warmth was very great, the summer being the driest ever known in Scotland; yet a total eclipse of the sun had happened that year, on Monday the 24th of March, which hence received the appellation of Mirk Monday.

The summer of 1679 was remarkably hot. It is related that one of the minions of tyranny, who, in that calamitous period, harassed the poor Presbyterians in Scotland with captious questions, having asked a shepherd in Fife, whether the killing of the notorious Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrew's, (which had happened in May,) was murder; he replied, that he could not tell, but there had been fine weather ever since.

The first year of the eighteenth century was very warm, and the two following years were of the same description.

It is a singular coincidence, that in 1718, the distance precisely of 100 years from the date of this paper, the weather was extremely hot and dry all over Europe. The air felt so oppressive, that all the theatres were shut in Paris. Scarcely any rain fell for the

space of nine months, and the springs and rivers were dried up. The following year was equally hot. The thermometer at Paris rose to 98° by Fahrenheit's scale. The grass and corn were quite parched. In some places, the fruit-trees blossomed two or three times.

Both the years 1723 and 1724 were dry and hot.

The year 1745 was remarkably warm and dry, but the following year was still hotter; insomuch that the grass withered, and the leaves dropped from the trees. Neither rain nor dew fell for several months; and, on the Continent, prayers were offered up in the churches, to implore the bounty of refreshing showers.

In 1748, the summer was again very warm.

In 1754, it was likewise extremely warm.

The years 1760 and 1761 were both of them remarkably hot, and so was the year 1763.

In 1774, it was excessively hot and dry.

Both the years 1778 and 1779 were warm and very dry.

The year 1788 was also very hot and dry; and of the same character was 1811, famous for its excellent vintage, and distinguished by the appearance of a brilliant comet.

ASSASSINATION OF HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.

An event of such magnitude as the assassination of Henry IV. may naturally be expected to have exercised the industry of writers living at the very period of its occurrence. The facts and details collected are, accordingly, very numerous; but, strange to say, the circumstances are related with little uniformity. All of them are of the most interesting character, connected as they are with one of the most brilliant epochs in the history of France, and presenting as they do a picture of the superstition and fanaticism of the time. The loss of the king was, indeed, universally deplored; for he was the best sovereign France ever had. It is not, therefore, surprising to find his memory cherished in France to this day; as, in the magnificent equestrian statue of Henry, on the Pont Neuf, at Paris, and, in the house which marks the spot on which the assassination was perpetrated. In his fate, too, there is matter of reflection for those who are interested in tracing concatenated events in history. He was the first Bourbon, of the Capetian race; and with him began that train of misfortunes which has, with few exceptions, attended this dynasty through the last two centuries and a-quarter: or, from Henry the Great to Louis Philippe.

In attempting a brief narrative of the above event, we shall commence with the regret of Henry at the coronation of Mary de Medici,

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his second queen, which he, with great reluctance, fixed for the 13th of May, 1610. "The more Henry contemplated the approach of that moment," says Sully, "so in proportion did he feel trouble and dread redouble in his soul." In bitterness and dejection, the poor king spent whole hours in the study of Sully, seated on a little, low chair, made expressly for him. "Ah! my friend," exclaimed the monarch, "how this coronation displeases me! I know not what it is, but my fears tell me that some signal misfortune will happen." While thus expressing himself, Henry kept striking his spectacle-case with his fingers, buried in profound thought; and from this melancholy reverie, he suddenly started up, striking his thighs vehemently with both hands, and crying aloud: "I shall die in this city, I shall never quit it—they will kill me." Sully then proposed to defer the coronation. "I wish to conceal nothing from you," said the king; "I must now candidly avow that it was formerly predicted I should be assassinated at the period of a grand solemnity, which I had commanded, and that I should expire in a coach; it is on this account I am so fearful." But the queen insisted upon the ceremony. When in private with Sully, the same sombre presentiments took possession of the king's mind, and he only interrupted the sad and melancholy silence, by repeating emphatically:—"They will kill me, my friend—they will kill me."

A contemporary writer says:—"I shall not dwell upon the dreams which, it is stated, his majesty, as well as the queen, had, on the night preceding the monarch's death, of a house falling upon his majesty in the street Ferronerie," &c. One thing, however, is certain, that, about six months before the murder, one Thomassin, a famous astrologer, foretold to the king, that it was essential he should beware of the month of May, 1610, and he even specified the day and hour when the king was to be murdered. Henry, however, ridiculed the astrologer, and taking him by the hair or the beard, he led him two or three times round the apartment, and then dismissed him.

On the day preceding the monarch's death, Marshal Bassompierre and the Duke of Guise, beheld, from a window of the Louvre, at Paris, the maypole fall, which had been planted near the staircase leading to the royal apartment, not a breath of air stirring at the time. On witnessing this circumstance, they looked mournfully at each other, and Bassompierre remarked, "I would not for all the world that had happened."

Such superstitious credence is referable to the prevalence of an implicit belief in omens at this period, which also seized upon the king's rooted melancholy. It is proved that Henry received numerous intimations that

conspiracies were plotting against his life; and one writer states upwards of fifty plots to have been planned for this king's destruction. An attempt had likewise some years previously been made upon the king's life.

The last mentioned writer, as well as Sully, states that a month prior to the king's assassination, a report was spread throughout Spain, and at Milan, of Henry's death, in a printed document; and that a courier, in his way through Liege, had announced the monarch's being killed. At Montargis, a note was found upon the altar of the principal church, containing a prediction of his approaching death. The report that Henry would terminate his existence in the course of this year being generally disseminated throughout France, it is, by no means astonishing that the people who adored him should have imagined they saw fatal prognostics in every direction.

Bassompierre says: "The king, shortly before his death, remarked: 'I know not how it is, Bassompierre, but I cannot persuade myself that I shall proceed to Germany.' He also, at various times, affirmed, 'I believe that I shall die soon.'"

At Douai, a priest, on his death-bed, said, "I have just beheld the greatest prince in Europe perish:" to which might be added a multiplicity of similar tales. At the queen's coronation, it was remarked that the arms of that princess had been improperly blazoned, the painter having, by mistake, annexed to the same the attributes of widowhood.

Every one now recalled to mind with dread, the grand eclipse of the sun which had occurred in 1608, and the terrible comet of 1609: in short, tremblings of the earth, the pestilence that raged throughout Paris in 1606; monsters born in various parts of France, (extraordinarily hideous and unknown fish, according to Sully, were caught on the French coast;) showers of blood, that is, rain of a reddish colour; singular inundations, an apparition, and many other prodigies, all which kept men in fear of some horrible catastrophe.

The coronation at St. Denis, on Thursday, the 13th of May, was performed in sadness and silence. The queen was to make her public entry into Paris, on the ensuing Sunday, May 16, and all expedition was used in preparing for that concluding ceremony. The day after the coronation, says Sully, the king's sadness so obviously increased, that all the courtiers were struck with his appearance. When he arose, he stated that he had enjoyed no rest, and M. de Vendôme entreated his majesty to take care of himself on that day in particular, which had been predicted as fatal; and requested his majesty not to go out: "I perceive," said the king, "that you have consulted the almanack, and heard of that fool La Brosse, (the astrologer,) and

my cousin, the Count Soissons : the former is an old idiot ; and you are yet very young, and little experienced."

It was remarked that on the preceding evening, Henry prayed much longer than usual ; and during the night, his agitation being overheard, some person in attendance approached the royal couch, when the king was found upon his knees, praying devoutly. No sooner had he arisen than he retired to his study and prayed : soon after he proceeded to mass, and when the service was ended, he continued a considerable time in fervent devotion.

After dinner, Henry lay down upon his bed, but could not sleep. He then inquired the hour, saying, he wished to go to the Arsenal and visit Sully, who was indisposed. But his indecision was painfully evident : he seemed to be struggling against the secret prognostic that troubled him, but which he refused to believe. He next consulted the queen, but did not wait for a reply ; then, advancing to the window, and raising his hand to his forehead, he exclaimed, "My God, my God, there is something here that dreadfully troubles me ! I know not what is the matter with me ; I cannot go from hence !" Henry, at length, ordered the carriage, and quitted the Louvre, followed by the dukes of Montbaron and Epemon, marshal Lavaradin, Roquelaure, la Force, Mirabeau, and Liancourt, first equerry. Upon the officer of the guard appearing, the king said, "I require neither you nor your guards ; for these forty years past, I have almost uniformly been the captain of my own guards ; I will not have any to surround my carriage." The coachman then having inquired where he was to drive, Henry peevishly replied, "Convey me from hence." Upon the driver, subsequently, repeating his former question, the king said, "to the cross of Trahoir ;" and, on arriving at that spot, he observed in a bewildered manner, "To the cemetery of the Saints Innocents." Henry here desired that the curtains of the carriage might be raised ; for, at that period, there were no glasses to the coaches, which were closed in by leather curtains. Had they been down, the assassin could not have directed his aim, nor struck the fatal blow.

The populace now gladdened by the presence of their adored monarch, made the air ring with acclamations as he proceeded on his route. But, Henry appeared insensible to this loyalty, and in profound reverie,—when the carriage was suddenly stopped at the end of the street *Ferronnerie*, by two wagons, (one loaded with wine, and the other with corn,) which blocked up the road : numerous stalls then placed at the termination of that street, also rendered the passage very narrow. The king's foot-pages quitted the carriage in order to see the way cleared, when one Francis

Ravillac, who had followed the vehicle from the Louvre, placed his foot upon a spoke of one of the hind-wheels, on the side where the monarch was seated, and supporting himself with one hand upon the door of the carriage, he, with the other, struck the king with a two-edged knife. The blow grazed the second and third ribs, and would not have proved mortal : the king exclaimed, "I am wounded !" at the same instant, he received a second stab, the weapon pierced his heart, and he instantly expired. So determined was the execrable assassin, that he aimed a third time, when, however, he struck the sleeve of the duke of Montbaron, who had raised his arm to parry off the weapon.

Of the seven individuals in the carriage with the monarch, the only person who had not been on uniformly good terms with the king, was the duke of Epemon. They were, doubtless, all occupied in observing the vehicles which impeded the royal carriage ; in addition to which, the blows were struck with the greatest rapidity. It is stated that, during the morning, Ravillac had continued for a great length of time at the Louvre, seated upon the steps of the portal, where the valets were waiting the arrival of the king. He had intended to strike the blow between the two doors, but he met the duke of Epemon on the spot where he had predetermined to attack the monarch. Ravillac afterwards acknowledged he had followed Henry in the morning to the church of the Feuillans, in order to commit the murder ; but that the duke of Vendôme, who arrived, forced him to keep at a distance.

Not one of the inmates of the carriage saw the king struck ; and, if the villain had thrown away the knife, he, probably, would not have been detected. All the personages immediately alighted from the carriage, to prevent the people, who flocked from every quarter, from tearing the assassin to pieces : three of the noblemen stood at the carriage-door to succour their master ; and one, perceiving the blood gush from his mouth, and that he was speechless, cried out, "The king is dead." Dreadful tumult followed : some of the people in the street rushed into the shops and houses, as if apprehensive of becoming the prey of some unknown enemies, and of the city being taken by assault. The duke of Epemon cried out that the king was only wounded ; and, to persuade the populace that such was the truth, he asked for a goblet of wine : many persons instantly rushed from the houses, and the most affecting exclamations of joy resounded on every side : the people flocked around the carriage to see their dear monarch, and could only be kept at a distance on being told it was requisite his Majesty should be forthwith conveyed to the Louvre for the purpose of having his wound examined. St. Michel,

one of the king's gentlemen in ordinary, had followed the carriage, but was not near it at the moment of the assassination. He came up on hearing the noise, drew his sword, snatched the bloody knife from the hand of the regicide, whom he would have killed, had not the duke of Epemon interposed. The villain was then confided to proper hands, and led away. "Two circumstances were particularly remarked," says Mezerai, "from which the reader may draw what inference he pleases. The one was, that immediately after the seizure of Ravillac, seven or eight men arrived with swords in hand, saying it was requisite the assassin should be killed; but they instantaneously concealed themselves among the crowd. The other fact was, the murderer's not being immediately conveyed to prison, but placed in the hands of Montigny: that he was kept for two days in the hotel of Rais, with so little privacy, that all ranks of people were permitted to communicate with him; and, among others, an ecclesiastic greatly indebted to the king, who, having addressed Ravillac, *my friend*, cautioned the prisoner not to implicate the innocent."

Meanwhile, the sad intelligence was communicated to the queen, who, on the same day, was declared regent during the minority of her son. Towards four o'clock, the news reached Sully at the Arsenal, who hastily dressed himself to proceed to the Louvre, where the king was laid out upon his bed, with his suite around him. Sully did not, however, enter the palace until two days afterwards, owing to some sinister warnings, which he received on his way thither: and he had not fortitude to enter the chamber containing the corpse of the monarch he adored, though it lay in state during eighteen days at the palace. The body was embalmed, and placed in a wooden coffin on a wooden bier, with a canopy covered with cloth of gold. After the above period, it was conveyed to St. Denis, and there buried with great pomp. In the mean time, such was the affliction of the Parisians, that the women, with dishevelled hair, rushed frantically through the streets; and the men bewildered with anguish, named imaginary accomplices, and swore to sacrifice them to their vengeance. The tumult became terrific, and was only appeased by the queen sending her nobles to address the crowds, whom, with great difficulty, they brought to reason.

Ravillac, the assassin, was a native of Angouleme, where he kept a school till the age of thirty-one or thirty-two. He was supposed by some persons to be of unsound mind; but this was not denoted by his conversation in prison, or his conduct at his execution. He had a brother, who died in Holland, and who, upon his death-bed, declared that in case Francis Ravillac had not

succeeded, he would have undertaken the deed.

A careful examination of Ravillac only proved that he was a man of heated imagination, who conceiving, according to his statement, that Henry had resolved on declaring war against the Pope, and did not take efficient measures to convert the Huguenots, adopted the resolution of assassinating him, whom he regarded as a tyrant that ought to be destroyed: in which ideas he had been strengthened by the sermons of the preachers of the Catholic League.

The torture to which Ravillac was submitted, has few parallels in the records of barbarity. Howel, writing from Paris, thus describes it: "Many consultations were held how to punish Ravillac, and there were some Italian physicians that undertook to prescribe a torment, that should last for three days; but he escaped only (!) with this:—his body was pulled between four horses, that one might hear his bones crack, and after the dislocation they were set again; and so he was carried in a cart, standing half naked, with a torch in that hand which had committed the murder; and, in the place where the act was done, it was cut off, and a gauntlet of hot oil was clapped upon the stump, to staunch the blood, whereto he gave a doleful shriek; then was he brought upon a stage, where a new pair of boots was provided for him, half filled with boiling oil; then his body was pincered, and hot oil was poured into the holes: in all the extremity of this torture, he scarcely showed any sense of pain, but when the gauntlet was clapped upon his arms to staunch the flux, at which time, he of reeking blood gave a shriek only; he bore up against all these torments about three hours before he died. All the confession that could be drawn from him was, that he thought he had done God good service, to take away that king, which would have embroiled all Christendom in an endless war."*

Ubal dini writes, May 30:—Ravillac persists that he has no accomplices, and that he has been moved by nothing but religious zeal. At last he has confessed his folly and guilt, with penitence, God be thanked, who, according to his wisdom and providence, has

* Howel's Familiar Letters, vol. i. No. xviii. To Sir James Crofts. From Paris. Sixth edit. 1688. The date of the letter is, in this edition, May 12, 1690; though the assassination did not take place till May 14. Howel adds: "A fatal thing it is that France should have three of her kings come to such violent deaths in so short a time: Henry II. running at tilt, was killed by a splinter of a lance that pierced his eye: Henry III., not long after, was killed by a young friar, who, instead of a letter which he pretended to have for him, pulled out of his long sleeve a knife, and thrusting it into the king's abdomen, 'so dispatched him;' but that regicide was hacked to pieces in the place by the nobles. The same destiny attended this king (Henry IV.) by Ravillac, which is now become a common name of reproach and infamy in France."

not permitted that more than one person should participate in this frightful crime, and

of which endless mischiefs might have proceeded.*

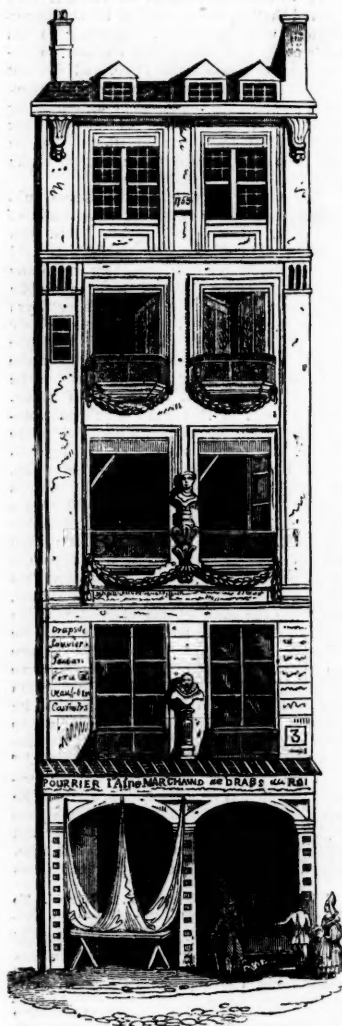
We have not space to enumerate the parties upon whom suspicion fell of participation in the assassination, notwithstanding Ravillac's avowal. As may be supposed, they were persons ambitious of power and place, to the acquirement of which the king was the only obstacle.

It remains to be explained that the street in which the assassination was perpetrated, was considerably widened in 1671, when the proprietor of the house marking the spot, placed in front of it a bust of Henry IV. with this inscription :

Henrici Magni recreat presentia cives,
Quos illi æterno federe junxit amor.

The accompanying cut represents the elevation of the house, the present occupier of which is the king's mercer.

* Raumer's Hist. Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Translated by Lord Francis Egerton. Letter xli.



(House at Paris, marking the site of Henry the Fourth's Assassination.)

that he should be preserved alive, in order to proclaim to the world the truth of the transaction, and to contradict the calumnies out

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GLEANINGS IN NATURAL HISTORY.—THIRD AND LAST SERIES.

By Edward Jesse, Esq.

[Our commendatory notices of the two preceding Series of these Gleanings, may be extended to the present volume; so as to render uncalled for the author's "apology for having protracted so light a work to its third series." It is brimful of delightful anecdotes of the habits of animals, exemplifying their peculiar faculties and sensibilities, and showing "how capable they are of affection, fidelity, courage, and, indeed, of many of the virtues which are wont to be admired in the human race." By setting forth these good qualities, and portraying the character of animals in its proper light, Mr. Jesse endeavours to awaken more kindly feelings towards them. He then notices the little inclination of the English to treat the brute creation with kindness, which he indulgently attributes to thoughtlessness rather than absolute cruelty. Yet, in what nation of Europe besides England are laws made for the protection of animals, and where else is published such a work as "The Animal's Friend, or, the Progress of Humanity,"*—the latter part of the title almost implying that our country is scarcely rescued from barbarism. To return to Mr. Jesse: he adds, that his object will be attained, "should any one be induced to lessen the miseries and sufferings of those animals which had been previously treated with unnecessary severity."

The natural-historical anecdotes extend through some two hundred pages of the pre-

* No. III. just published, enumerates 120 prosecutions by the Animal's Friend Society in ten months

sent volume, the remainder being occupied with some very pleasant gleanings of the past and present condition of Kew, Richmond, Hampton Court, and Windsor Castle; the information in which is worth a shoal of misleading guidebooks, stuck over with insignificant pictures.

We intend to go leisurely through Mr. Jesse's book, at this gleanings season, to garner some of his most interesting facts and observations.]

Sagacity of Dogs.—A gentleman, now residing in London, while travelling on the outside of one of the North mails, was a witness of the interesting fact I am about to relate. It was a dark night, and as the mail was travelling at the usual rate, a dog barked incessantly before the leaders, and continued to do so for some time, jumping up to the heads of the horses. The coachman, fearful of some accident, pulled up, and the guard got down for the purpose of driving the animal away. The dog, however, ran a little way before the guard, and then returned to him, making use of such peculiar gestures, that he was induced to take out one of the lamps, and then follow the dog. After doing so for about a hundred yards, he found a farmer lying drunk across the road, and his horse grazing by the side of it. But for this extraordinary sagacity, and affection of the dog for his master, the coach would most probably have been driven over the body of the sleeping man.

A drunken rat-catcher of the name of Tindesley, well known at Hampton Court and its neighbourhood, was always followed by a large, rough, half-starved looking terrier dog. The rat-catcher and his dog were inseparable companions, and one looked just as wretched as the other. In May last, (1834,) the rat-catcher was found dead in a ditch near Thames Ditton. He must have fallen into it when he was drunk. When he was discovered, the dog was seen endeavouring with all his might to drag the body out of the ditch, and, in his efforts, he had torn the coat from the shoulders of his master. The dog had saved his life on two former occasions, when he was nearly similarly circumstanced.

An old friend of mine (Major M.) had a very sagacious pointer, which was kept in a kennel with several other dogs. His game-keeper having one day gone into the kennel, dropped his watch by some accident. On leaving the place, he fastened the gate as usual, but had not gone far from it when he heard it rattled very much; on looking round, he saw his favourite pointer standing with her fore-paws against it, and shaking it, evidently for the purpose of attracting his attention. On going up to her, he found her with his watch in her mouth, which she restored to him with much seeming delight.

Mr. Poynder, the brother to the Treasurer of Christ's Hospital, brought home, last February, from Newfoundland, a dog, a native of that country. This animal had established a strong claim on his master's affection, from the circumstance of his having twice saved his life by his sagacity in finding the road home, when Mr. Poynder had lost his way in snow-storms, many miles from any shelter. He had also swam more than three miles to gain the ship, after his master had embarked for England, and determined to leave the animal to the care of friends at Newfoundland. Mr. Poynder landed at Blackwall, and took the dog in a coach to his father's house at Clapham. He was there placed in a stable, which he did not leave until the second day after his arrival, when he accompanied his master in a coach to Christ's Hospital. He left the coach in Newgate Street, and proceeded through the passage leading to the treasurer's house; not being able to gain admission at the garden entrance, Mr. Poynder went round to the front door, and thinks he left the dog at the garden entrance, for he did not recollect seeing him afterwards. In the hurry and excitement of meeting his friends, he for a few minutes forgot his dog, but the moment he recollected himself he went in search of him. He was no where to be seen, and his master hastened to prepare his description, and to offer a reward in the public papers. Early, however, next morning, a letter arrived from the captain of the ship, in which Mr. Poynder had sailed from Newfoundland, informing him that the dog was safe on board, having swam to the vessel early on the previous day. By comparing the time on which he arrived, with that when he was missing, it appeared that he must have gone directly through the city from Christ's Hospital to Wapping, where he took to the water.

A gentleman was riding, last summer, on the turnpike-road, and perceived an object in the middle of it, which, on a nearer approach, proved to be two large dogs. As they did not move on his coming near, he guided his horse on one side, and dismounted to ascertain the cause of their remaining stationary. He found that one of them had broken his leg, and the other had crept under the limb, and placed himself so as to form an easy support to the broken bone of his companion. This anecdote may appear too extraordinary to be true. It is, however, authenticated by a gentleman whose name I do not feel myself at liberty to mention, but who related the circumstance as he himself witnessed it.

Cats are generally persecuted animals, and are supposed to show but little attachment to those who are kind to them. I have known a cat, however, evince great uneasiness during the absence of her owner; and it is stated

that when the Duke of Norfolk was committed to the Tower in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a favourite cat made her way into his prison-room by getting down the chimney.

Cats have been known also to do their best to protect the property of their masters, as well as dogs. A man who was sentenced to transportation for a robbery, informed me, after his conviction, that he and two others broke into the house of a gentleman near Hampton Court. While they were in the act of plundering it, a large, black cat flew at one of the robbers, and fixed her claws on each side of his face. He added that he never saw any man so much frightened in his life.

Eels certainly come upon grass lands to feed at night upon worms and snails. In the meadows at Barford, in Warwickshire, they have been cut in two by the mowers; and an old keeper there assured a friend of mine that he had frequently intercepted them on their way back to the river early in the morning. Their movements on land are very quick. In a clear, rapid stream, eels may sometimes be observed, having their tails coiled round a piece of rush or flag, like snakes, the force of the water washing their bodies backwards and forwards. In this position, they are prepared to seize upon any prey which comes within their reach, feeding upon aquatic insects, frogs or fish. Eels have been known to fasten even upon large carp, like a bull-dog, and no exertion of the fish can shake them off. An eel will thus attach itself to a carp till it has destroyed it.*

I may here mention that there was no eel fare this spring, (1834,) in the river Thames. A very few stragglers were observed, but not higher than Teddington. A circumstance of this sort has not occurred for many years. The Thames was, however, unusually low in the spring, and the eels might have made their passage more in the middle of the stream instead of the sides, as has been heretofore the case.

That eels hibernate during the cold months, there can, I think, be little doubt, few or none being caught at that time. I have endeavoured also, but without success, to procure eels in the winter, from those places in the river Thames where I have every reason to believe they go to spawn. I read an account, which, if correct, would serve to prove what I have now stated. A boy at Arthurstown in the county of Wexford, on the river of Waterford, perceived something of a very unusual appearance floundering upon the sand at low water. Upon a nearer approach, he found it to be a

* The more rapid the stream is in which eels are found, the better they appear to be, both as to condition and colour:—

"The Kennett swift for silver eels renown'd."

quart bottle, which showed many symptoms of animation. He seized it and brought it in. It was found to contain an eel so much thicker than the neck of the bottle, that it must be supposed the eel made its lodgment there when it was younger, and, of course, smaller. It was necessary to break the bottle for the purpose of liberating the fish.

If this account is true, it goes to prove in a curious way, as far as one instance can do so, the propensity which eels have to hibernate during the cold months. It also seems to prove that they do this in the tide-way, if they can, and that they neither feed nor deposit their spawn till the season of hibernation is over. It is, indeed, a general opinion amongst old fishermen that eels cannot bear cold.

Non-migration of Fish.—Every year serves to convince me more and more, that the idea which I ventured, with considerable diffidence, to advance in the first Volume of my *Gleanings of the non-migration of gregarious fish*, such as mackerel, herrings, pilchards, &c., is a correct one. It has been supposed by Pennant, and other able writers on Natural History, that large shoals of herrings leave the neighbourhood of Shetland in June, and surround the island of Great Britain and Ireland, congregating again off the Landsend in September. From the united testimony of many intelligent fishermen, and from my own observation, I am convinced that no such migration takes place, but that by a beautiful and benevolent arrangement of Providence, the gregarious fish, which are of such vast utility to man, leave the depths of the sea at certain, ordained periods. Each vast shoal is succeeded by another. We have the mackerel, the herring, the sprat, and the pilchard, in regular succession. These fish leave their haunts when they are in the highest perfection, and frequent shallows where they are readily captured. If they had not been endowed with this impulse, the enormous benefits they are of to mankind would be lost. Surely the mind of man cannot have a more interesting or indeed a nobler subject for meditation, than the consideration of the ways of Providence in the works of creation.

Instinct in a Turtle.—The following extraordinary fact in Natural History was communicated to me by an officer of rank in the British army. He informed me that a ship, which touched at the island of Ascension on her way to England, took in several large turtle, and, amongst others, one, which, from some accident, had only three fins. It was in consequence called, and known on board the ship by the name of "the Lord Nelson." It was marked in the usual way by having certain initials and numbers burnt upon its under shell with a hot iron, and which marks are known never to be obliterated.

Owing to various causes, the ship was a long time on her passage homewards, a circumstance which occasioned many of the turtle to die, and most of the rest were very sickly. This was the case with "the Lord Nelson," and it was so nearly dead when the ship arrived in the Channel, that the sailors, with whom it was a favourite, threw it overboard, in order, as they said, to give it a chance. Its native element, however, appears to have revived it; for, two years afterwards, the very same turtle was again taken at its old haunt, on the island of Ascension. The proofs brought forward of the accuracy of the statement, place its authenticity beyond a doubt, and it affords a most extraordinary instance of the wonderful instinct possessed by animals. When we consider the vast tract of waters this turtle had to pass through, and that the island of Ascension is only a little speck in the mighty ocean, it is impossible not to reflect with wonder upon that unexplained instinct, which enabled so unwieldy, and apparently so stupid, an animal, to find its way back to its former haunts.

Affection of a Squirrel.—In cutting down some trees on the estate lately purchased by the Crown at Petersham, for the purpose of being annexed to Richmond Park, the axe was applied to the root of a tall, drawn-up tree, on the top of which was a squirrel's nest. A rope was fastened to the tree for the purpose of pulling it down more expeditiously; the workmen cut at the roots, the rope was pulled, the tree swayed backwards and forwards, and at last fell. During all these operations, a female squirrel never attempted to desert her new-born young, but remained with them in the nest. When the tree fell down, she was thrown out of the nest and secured unhurt, and was put into a cage with her young ones. She suckled them for a short time, but refused to eat. Her maternal affection, however, remained to the last moment of her life, and she died in the act of affording all the nourishment in her power to her offspring.

Birds' Nests.—Birds, indeed, frequently build in singular localities. One of the workmen employed in the gardens of Hampton-Court Palace, discovered, last summer, a kingfisher's nest in the bank of a small gravel-pit, in the wilderness of that place, and within a short distance of the public foot-path leading through it, and which is much frequented. There were six eggs in the nest, which was composed as usual of small fish-bones, and was placed about two feet in the bank. The small gravel pit was perfectly dry, and the workmen were in the constant habit of throwing the sweepings of the gardens into it. The old birds showed but little fear of the workmen, and this led to the discovery of the nest.

A pair of robins built their nest this year,

(1834,) on a flower-pot standing on the outside of my parlour-window, and although the female was much looked at, and persons were continually passing, she sat upon her eggs in the most fearless manner. In the Magazine of Natural History, it is stated that a pair of robins, for two years together, affixed their nest to the bible as it lay on the reading-desk, in the parish church of Hampton, in Arden, Warwickshire. The worthy vicar would on no account suffer the birds to be disturbed, and accordingly introduced another bible into the church, from which he read the lessons.

Hiving Bees.—It is interesting to compare the customs of the ancients, with those of modern times. Cottagers are in the habit of striking a brass pan to make a noise when their bees are swarming. So it was when Virgil wrote his fourth Georgic;—

"Tinnitusque cie, et Matris quate cymbala circum."

"And ring the tinkling brass, and sacred cymbals sound."

The Public Journals.

THE LADY MAGDALENE: A TRADITIONAL BALLAD, BY MARY HOWITT.

A Legend of an English Hall.

PART I.

IN a brave old house dwells Magdalene,

And with her there are three—

The blithe old man, the gardener;

And the good Dame Margery;

And a priest, who cometh now and then,

With a high and shaven crown,

With a foot that trod so silently,

And a long, black, camlet gown.

All up and down the galleries

Went the Lady Magdalene,

A-looking at the pictures old,

That on the walls were seen.

"And who is this, Dame Margery,

With the gold chain and the sword?"

"Oh, that was thy father, Magdalene,

And he was a noble lord!"

"And who is this boy, Dame Margery,

With the greyhound at his side?"

"Ah! that was thy brother, Magdalene;

But at four years old he died!"

"And tell me, I prithee, Margery,

Who's this with the downcast eye?—

It troubles my heart, Dame Margery,

But to pass that lady by."

No answer at all made Margery,

For a little season's space;

And again the maiden, Magdalene,

Looked up into her face.

"There are chambers many," quoth Magdalene,

"And many a stately bed;

And many a room so beautiful,

All green, and gold, and red.

"How is it, I pray, Dame Margery,

That all alone I dwell?

I have asked the question of myself,

And I'm sure I cannot tell.

"In the village street, Dame Margery,

Even in winter weather,

I see the children, sevens and eights,

All playing there together.

"But, in this large and grand old house,
I pray, how may it be,
That I am thus alone, alone,
With none for company?"

"I look into the distant fields,
On the terrace as I stand,
And see the mothers walking there,
With their children by the hand.

"And now, I pray, Dame Margery,
Who's this with the golden hair?
An earnest love is in my heart
For the lady pictured there."

Sore troubled was she, Dame Margery—
The tears were in her eye,
And she wiped them with her withered hand,
As thus she made reply.

"That lady is fair, sweet Magdalene,
Was ever fair and mild;
She was thy mother, Magdalene;
I nursed her when a child.

"Ah, me! and I can remember well—
But all those times are fled—
When there were children and friends enow,
To sleep in every bed.

"When the great hall-table was too small
For the guests who sat to meat;
And the serving men were in liveries green,
With fair shoes on their feet.

"There were thirty horses then i' th' stall,
And grooms, nigh half-a-score;
I then was a maiden, reckoned fair—
But all those times are o'er!"

"The house, i' troth, is silent now,
And hath a look of gloom—
I can remember when there were lights
And music in every room!"

"The jackdaws now, and the swallows, build
In the chimneys cold and tall;
The ivy creeps o'er the window-glass,
And green damps on the wall!"

"I can remember, Magdalene,
When the shrubs, that grow so wild,
Were set, scarce bigger than my hand—
Thy mother was then a child.

"Now, there's good old John, the gardener,
Thinks those times will come again;
Mayhap they may, sweet Magdalene,
But, I'm sure, I know not when!"

PART II.

On the terrace broad, walked Magdalene,
With gentle steps and slow;
And blithe old John, the gardener,
Was working down below.

And aye sung the blithe old gardener—
"The bird upon the tree,
Is merry i' th' budding spring-time,
And I am as merry as he."

And he cut the leaves of the snowdrop down,
And tied up the daffodily;
And then he sang, as he bent at 's work,
With a "Hiho! willy, willy."

Down the broad stone-steps went Magdalene,
And stood by the old flower-bed;
Yet still at his work the old man bent,
Nor ever raised up his head.

"'Tis a lonesome place," said Magdalene,
"A lovesome, dreary place!"
The blithe old man, he ceased his work,
And gazed into her face.

"Ay, ay, is it so, my lady fair?"
Said the wondering gardener;
"Why, I can remember yon terrace steps
With children all astir.

"Ay, there was my Lady Isabel,
With hair like the raven's wing;
And the second sister, Adeline,
A wilful, proud, young thing.

"There was my Lord Francis, my Lady Jane,
And your blessed lady-mother;
There were two brothers besides, and he
That was dearer than a brother.

"He was your father afterwards—
Ah, me! how time moves on!—
There were seven children then i' the house,
And now there is but one.
And all those happy children,
Like flowers of spring are gone.

"And then, what troops of ladies grand,
Went walking up and down;
Each softly fanning of herself,
In a shining silken gown.

"What gay and gallant gentlemen,
All clad in velvet fine;
What riding in and out there was;
What drinking of the wine!"

"Ay, sure enough, the place is still—
Stillier than it was then;
But, perchance, my Lady Magdalene,
It may be blithe again!"

Then the blithe old man bent down to 's work,
And harder worked than ever;
Singing "Fa, la, la, to-morrow will come,
And drown care in the river!"

And the blithe old man cut down the leaves
Of the crocus, matted and wan:
The Lady Magdalene walked away,
And he kept singing on.

PART III.

In a stately room, the grave old priest
Doth sit at eventide;
He turneth over a great old book,
And Magdalene sits by 's side.

"Put down the book," said Magdalene,
"I cannot read to-day;
Put down the book, good father,
And hearken what I say!"

Up from his book the grave old man
Did slowly raise his eyes;
And silently looked at Magdalene,
As if in calm surprise.

"Now, father good," quoth Magdalene,
"This day I pray thee tell,
Wherefore in this grand house alone,
Year after year I dwell?"

"Thou hast taught me both to read and write;
Hast taught me all I know—
Yet hast kept me from my kind apart—
I pray, why is it so?"

"Yet, love, a deep and fervent love,
Thou hast ever taught to me—
From God, down to the meanest thing
Of his great family.

"Father, I've seen the children poor—
Glad sisters, too, and brothers;
And the joy that lives within the heart
Of lowly village-mothers.

"I've seen, upon the Sabbath-morn,
How many a loving band
Of kindly Christian people came
With their children by the hand.

"I see them kneeling, side by side,
Each to the other known,
Like groups of saints together set—
But I kneel all alone!"

"Oh, 'tis a pleasant sight to me!
And yet my heart doth ache,
To see such holy happiness
That I can not partake!"

"Why is it thus, I pray thee tell,
That none with me abide?
Oh, for a loving sister,
To worship at my side!"

" Father, I scarce know who I am,
Save of a lineage high,
And that the story of my house
Is a dark, sad history.

" Thou hast been a righteous friend to me—
I have loved thee many a year—
But, father, why alone I dwell,
I pray thee let me hear!"

" For a moment's space, the grave old man
No answer made at all;
The tears were in his mild, grey eyes,
And yet no tear did fall.

" Harken to me, my Magdalene,"
At length he did reply:—

" Thou art the sole, surviving stem
Of a great old family.

" I can remember when this house
Was full of sons and daughters;
When its fortunes all seemed flourishing
As willows by the waters.

" Daughters and sons, I mind me well
What a noble band were there;
The sons all goodly men of might,
The daughters wondrous fair.

" I can recall this solitude,
An ever-changing crowd;
And the silence of these chambers vast
Was riot long and loud.

" I will not tell thee, Magdalene,
Of heartlessness and crime;
Enough, the wrath of Heaven did scourge
The evil of that time.

" There was a blight upon that race—
They one by one did fall;
Sorrow and sin had stricken them,
And death consumed them all.

" There was but one of all her house
Whom folly did not win;
An angel in a woman's form—
Thy mother, Magdalene!

" And when, upon her bed of death,
All in her youth she lay—
An angel, to her native skies
Ready to pass away;

" Ready to pass away to God,
Save for one mortal tie—
Thyself, my precious Magdalene,
That in her arms did lie.

" Take, take, my friend, this little child,"
Said she, 'when I am dead;
And, as thou know'st I should declare,
Let her be nurtured.

" Thou know'st the follies of this house,
Thou know'st its sin,' quoth she,
'And from such folly and such sin,
I pray thee keep her free.'

" She died!—the place was desolate—
Her kindred all were gone—
There was but I, her ghostly friend,
And thou, her orphaned one!

" Their thriftless lives had made thee poor,
Their shame thy name had spent—
Sorely run out were all thy lands,
And mortgaged all thy rent.

" I trained thee in this sober wise,
And in this solitude,
That thou might'st grow up innocent,
Thoughtful, and wise, and good.

" Thy manors now lay far and wide,
Thy noble lands are free;
And old and young, my Magdalene,
Are looking up to thee.

" Ere long, thou wilt have friends enow,
And so, Heaven give thee grace,
The sounds of joy may ring again
From this deserted place,

" It has been stripped and desolate,
Its waut laid open wide;
But the innocence of a little child
The place hath purified!

" Be patient yet, my Magdalene;
Please God, the time shall be,
When blameless mirth and merry friends
Shall here abide with thee!"

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine.

MR. BECKFORD AND FINTHILL ABBEY.

(From the Editor's clever Notes (in 1833,) on *Gardens and Country Seats: in the Gardener's Mag.*)

WE spent the greater part of two days in looking over this place, even to the cottages and cottage-gardens in the village; and, having met with some of the old men who had worked on the grounds during the whole of Mr. Beckford's time, we indulged ourselves in asking questions, and procured much curious information respecting the building of the abbey, the mode of life of Mr. Beckford while he resided in it, the falling down of the tower in Mr. Farquhar's time, and the general effect of Mr. Beckford's immense expenditure on the surrounding population.

It appears that Mr. Beckford pursued the objects of his wishes, whatever they were, not coolly and considerably like most other men, but with all the enthusiasm of passion. No sooner did he decide upon any point, than he had it carried into immediate execution, whatever might be the cost. After the abbey was commenced, he was so impatient to get it finished, that he kept regular relays of men at work night and day, including Sundays; supplying them liberally with ale and spirits while they were at work, and when anything was completed, which gave him particular pleasure, adding an extra 5*l.* or 10*l.* to be spent in drink. The first tower, the height of which from the ground was 400 ft., was built of wood, in order to see its effect: this was then taken down, and the same form put up in wood covered with cement. This fell down, and the tower was built a third time, on the same foundation, with brick and stone. The foundation of the tower was originally that of a small summer-house, to which Mr. Beckford was making additions when the idea of the abbey occurred to him; and this idea he was so impatient to realize, that he could not wait to remove the summer-house, to make a proper foundation for the tower, but carried it up on the walls already standing. The kinds of masonry, brickwork, and carpentry which were used may easily be ascertained from the parts remaining. Nothing can be worse: the walls were carried up in some parts of brick, in others of stone, and in others of studwork, sometimes inclosed in stone or brick casing, but always of the very worst description of workmanship.

To those who are acquainted with the details of building, and especially with the

practices of the worst London builders, the exhibition here is most amusing in a scientific point of view; and one may easily conceive that the work had been chiefly carried on by men in a state of intoxication. The manner in which the tower fell may be mentioned as something remarkable. It had given indications of falling for some time, and the more valuable parts of the windows and other articles had been removed. Mr. Farquhar, however, who then resided in one angle of the building, and who was in a very infirm state of health, could not be brought to believe that there was any danger. He was wheeled out in his chair on the lawn in front, about half an hour before it fell; and though he saw the cracks, and the deviation of the central tower from the perpendicular, he treated the idea of its coming down as ridiculous. He was carried back to his room, however, and the tower fell almost immediately. From the manner in which it fell, from the lightness of the materials of which it was constructed, and partly also from a number of workmen having been for some days making a noise in taking down articles, which it was supposed by Mr. Farquhar's nephew the tower would injure if it fell, neither Mr. Farquhar nor the servants, who were in the kitchen preparing dinner, knew that it had fallen; though the immense collection of dust which rose into the atmosphere had assembled almost all the inhabitants of the village, and had given the alarm even as far as Wardour Castle. Only one man (who died in 1833) saw it fall. He is said to have described its manner of falling as very beautiful; it first sank perpendicularly and slowly, and then burst and spread over the roofs of the adjoining wings on every side, but rather more on the south-west than on the others. The cloud of dust which arose was enormous, and such as completely to darken the air for a considerable distance around for several minutes. Such was the concussion in the interior of the building, that one man was forced along a passage, as if he had been in an air-gun, to the distance of 30 ft., among dust so thick as to be felt. Another, on the outside, was in the like manner carried to some distance. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured. With all this, it is almost incredible that neither Mr. Farquhar nor the servants in the kitchen should have heard the tower fall, or known that it had fallen, till they saw through the windows the people of the village who had assembled to see the ruins. Still, we were assured by different persons that this was the fact. We can hardly account for it by the lightness of the materials and the distance of the tower from the kitchen, and the room inhabited by Mr. Farquhar, though this was very considerable, since the dust must surely have penetrated everywhere to such an extent

as to excite suspicion. We were informed, however, that the dust occasioned by taking out the windows, &c., was so considerable, that when Mr. Farquhar's table was covered with dust from the falling of the tower, he thought it arose from the same cause. Mr. Farquhar, it is said, could scarcely be convinced that the tower was down; and when he was so, he said he was glad of it, for that now the house would not be too large for him to live in. Mr. Beckford, when told at Bath, by his servant, that the tower had fallen, merely observed, that it had then made an obeisance to Mr. Farquhar, which it had never done to him.

In confirmation of our idea that Mr. Beckford's enjoyments consisted of a succession of violent impulses, we may mention that, when he wished a new walk to be cut in the woods, or any work of that kind to be done, he used to say nothing about it in the way of preparation, but merely give orders, perhaps late in the afternoon, that it should be cleared out and in a perfect state by the following morning at the time he came out to take his ride. The whole strength of the village was then put in requisition, and employed during the night; and the next day, when Mr. Beckford came to inspect what was done, if he was pleased with it, he used to give a 5*l.* or a 10*l.* note to the men who had been employed to drink, besides, of course, paying their wages, which were always liberal. Even his charities were performed in the same manner. Suddenly he has been known to order a hundred pairs of blankets to be purchased and given away; or all the firs to be cut out of an extensive plantation, and all the poor who chose to take them away to be permitted to do so, provided it were done in one night. He has also been known suddenly to order all the wagons and carts that could be procured to be sent off for coal to be distributed among the poor. Mr. Beckford seldom rode out beyond his gates, but when he did he was generally asked for charity by the poor people. Sometimes he used to throw a 1*l.* note or a guinea to them, and sometimes he used to turn round and give the suppliants a severe horsewhipping. When the last was the case, soon after he had ridden away, he generally sent back a guinea or two to the party who had been beaten. In his mode of life Mr. Beckford had many singularities; though he never had any society, yet he had his table covered every day in the most splendid style. He has been known to give orders for a dinner for twelve persons, and to sit down alone to it attended by twelve servants in full dress, eat of one dish, and send all the rest away. There were no bells in the house, with the exception, we believe, of one room, occupied occasionally by his daughter, the Duchess of Hamilton. The servants used to wait by turns in the ante-

rooms to the rooms which Mr. Beckford might occupy at the time. The rooms in which he lived in general were exceedingly small, and even low in the ceiling. In short, according to our ideas of a well-proportioned room, there never was one in the building. The finest were cubes of 22 ft. on the side.

One of the last things which Mr. Beckford did, after having sold Fonthill, and ordered horses to be put to his carriage to leave the place for ever, was to mount his pony, and ride round with his gardener, to give directions for various alterations and improvements which he wished to have executed. On returning to the house, his carriage being ready, he stepped into it, and has never visited Fonthill since. Though Mr. Beckford spent immense sums of money at Fonthill (we were informed, on what we consider good authority, that the place in all cost him 1,600,000*l.*), it does not appear that he has at all elevated the character of the labouring classes in the neighbourhood; on the contrary, we were informed by Mr. Joy, the manager for the present proprietor, that the effect was directly the reverse. The men, in Mr. Beckford's time, were sunk past recovery in habits of drunkenness; and the consequence is, that there are now only two or three of the village labourers alive, who were then employed.

These are but a few of the numerous tales which were told us by different persons about Fonthill; and it must be recollected that we do not vouch for the truth of any of them, though we think the whole of them are very likely to be true. We admire in Mr. Beckford his vivid imagination and cultivated mind, and that good taste in landscape-gardening which produced the perfect unity of character which pervades the grounds at Fonthill. We also give him full credit for his good sense in having quitted the place when he could no longer afford to keep it up, and the honourable principle he showed in never getting into debt, but paying liberal prices and ready money to the last. We must, however, enter our protest against the recklessness with which he employed his wealth to gratify his wishes, without regard to its demoralizing effects on the labouring population of his neighbourhood, effects so serious that it will take a generation to remove them. Far happier will it always be for a country gentleman to cultivate feelings of kindness and sympathy for all those that are about him, and to encourage similar feelings in them towards him, than merely to lavish money upon them. Still, it is as impossible not to admire Mr. Beckford, as it is not to admire Lord Byron, from the native grandeur of his mind, its superior cultivation, and the high aristocratic feeling which he possessed, unmingled with the slightest shade of meanness. His faults and eccentricities

appear to have been chiefly caused by an ardent temperament, stimulated by the early possession of almost unbounded wealth, and unchecked by the restraints of reason, prudence, and human sympathy.

The Gatherer.

Ude's Plan for a Supper.—My plan for a ball is to ornament the sideboard with a basket of fruit, instead of insignificant pieces of pastry, which are at once expensive in making, and objects of ridicule to the connoisseur. Place in their stead things that can be eaten,—such as jelly, plates of mixed pastry, and sandwiches of a superior kind; and if the founder of the feast be great and generous, avail yourself of his generosity, and make excellent articles, but never in too great profusion. The chief fault of all cooks is that they are too profuse in their preparations. The persons who attend a ball given by one of the nobility, are, it is to be presumed, of the same class, and have the same customs,—dining at a late hour, and are not to be tempted even by the most enticing assemblage of aspice of fowls, of lobsters, of fillet of sole, of ham, &c.—Take care not to load the sideboard with anything but dishes agreeably but simply prepared. The lovers of good cheer do not like objects which present a *huddled* appearance. Affix a label to each plate, indicating its contents, and you will find that this arrangement will give the guests an opportunity of taking refreshments without being obliged to seat themselves at a table, from whence the ladies cannot rise without disordering their dresses, *which to them is matter of far greater moment than the best supper in the world.*

Trafalgar.—The battle of Trafalgar was fatal to the three admirals engaged in it. Nelson was killed; Gravina died in consequence of his wounds; and Villeneuve, who was made prisoner, was taken to England, where he put an end to his existence.

The Tower of Nesle, at Paris, was round, very lofty, and attached to a higher tower, of smaller diameter, which contained a spiral staircase. This tower corresponded with a similar one on the opposite bank of the river, at an angle of the city wall, near the Louvre, called *la Tour qui fait le coin*. In times of danger, an iron chain was fixed across the Seine from the Tower of Nesle to the *Tour qui fait le coin*, and closed the western entrance to the city of Paris. These towers were pulled down in the year 1661.

Rackets were not originally used in tennis: the impulse was given to the ball by the hand, whence the name of *jeu de paume* is derived. Afterwards a leather gauntlet was used, and about the middle of the fifteenth century rackets were introduced.

In the city of Algiers, (says Pautanti,) it is as common for a man to call himself a saint, as for people amongst us to say that they are a smith, carpenter, lawyer, philosopher, or great man. And like nobility in Europe, the holiness of a Mahometan passes from father to son; where the latter is respected equally with his father, because he possesses the same privileges, dignities, and titles. W. G. C.

Classic Trade.—In Grenada are a Vale of Tempe, Corinth, and Parnassus. Shapeless masses are mistaken for temples; but the beholder is speedily informed that they are trash-houses and grinding-mills, and that the Vale of Tempe produces tolerable sugar-crops: Parnassus is remarkable for the excellence of its rum, and Corinth has fallen into the hands—neither of Persians nor Turks—but of a very promising attorney.

Perfection.—When the Duchess of Albe-marle arrived at Jamaica, the Speaker of the House of Assembly thus addressed her grace: "This is an honour which the opulent kingdoms of Mexico and Peru could never arrive at; and even Columbus's ghost would be appeased for all the indignities he endured of the Spaniards, could he but know that his own beloved soil was hallowed by such footsteps."

Crocodiles.—Humboldt estimates the male crocodile to be at the age of puberty, when it is ten years old, and 8 ft. long, and he concludes that one dissected by Monsieur Bonpland, which was 22 ft. 3 in. long, must have been 28 years old.

New Fish.—Scrymgeour: alias Jem of the Ocean. An odd fish, described by Miller; about 12½ stone; supposed to be amphibious; never swallows his native element; very voracious; spouts like a whale; destructive to turtle, and possesses electrical properties, whence American naturalists have styled him the Jem-notus of New York.

The small brown lizard of Jamaica is remarkably fond of the society of man, and its attention is strongly attracted by music. Dr. Madden was in the habit of feeding one in an arbour with crumbs of bread, which he used to place on his knee; and the little creature would descend from a branch above him, where it would remain reconnoitering him for some minutes previously, and then crawl on his knee and feed on the bread without any apprehension. The Doctor saw a brown lizard at Barbadoes in the governor's drawing-room, which, he was informed, was so docile and domesticated, as to be a regular inmate of the king's house.

Railways in Germany.—The road from Nuremberg to Furth will be opened this month; that from Dresden to Leipsic is in construction; that from Cologne to the Belgian frontier will probably be commenced

immediately. For those from Elberfeld to Roer, and from Elberfeld to Dusseldorf, subscriptions are opened. That from Minden to the Rhine is under consideration. Its importance, in a military point of view, leaves no doubt of its being shortly undertaken. It will unite the Weser with the Lippe, and will join the Rhine in two places (Dusseldorf and Deutz) opposite Cologne. That from Berlin to Potsdam is decided upon, and will serve as a model for the other railways in Germany. It will be laid by the best engineers of Berlin. For the roads from Berlin to Leipsic, from Berlin to Magdebourg, and from Magdebourg to Leipsic, subscriptions of 14,844,400 francs have been received, and they will be encouraged by the Prussian government. The projected railroad from Berlin to Stettin is favoured by the Hereditary Prince of Prussia. In Austria, two gigantic undertakings are in contemplation—a road from Vienna to Lemberg, in Galicia, and another from Vienna to Trieste, in the Gulf of Venice. The first will have to run in a direct line, by the map, 100 Belgian leagues, of 20 to a degree, and the second, a distance of 60 leagues.—*Paris Advertiser.*

All the other theatres and public places of amusement in Paris contribute to support the splendour of the Opera by a tax on their gross receipts.

I wonder if this great world will ever cease to be hoaxed with the idea that the pleasures of society are in proportion to the grandeur of the scale on which they are enjoyed.—*Madden.*

A negro, on being asked if he was not sorry for his master's death, replied: "No, massa hab plenty of people in England to be sorry for him; him no want poor nigger to be sorry for him."

Dr. Madden tells us that when the fire-fly of Jamaica is irritated, its phosphorescence is so strong, that in a dark room he was able to read some lines of a letter by holding the fly over the lines, and moving it along them.

Negro Funeral.—Dr. Madden, when in the West Indies, one day, undertook to read the burial service over a negro, which was listened to with great attention. But when the Doctor came to the part of "dust to dust, and ashes to ashes," the negro who officiated as sexton, and was prepared with a spade of earth for the usual ceremony, interrupted him with an intimation that he had neglected to order the coffin to be put down first: "Put him in de hole first, massa,—always put him in de hole first."

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